

BRAMBLE-FRUIT

BY

HELEN UNDERWOOD HOYT



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(Mrs. Robert Whiting Daniels)

1897-1930

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POEMS

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FOR THE HAPPINESS OF
HER TWO SONS

Introduction

These poems convey a portrait of a rarely beautiful personality. They are not a record for the student of criticism, nor a life history for the psycho-analyst. Still less are they exercises in aesthetic literary composition. They are the poetry of a sensitive, beauty-loving, and fastidious young girl, whose reluctant feet pause on the threshold of woman's responsibilities, but who looks at life as a whole, sees its vistas, and enters upon the years of "the debated thoughts that accuse or defend." The various language of nature and of art is freely translated into the terms of her moods and her resolution, but without final loss of her own gallant poise. The delicate beauty of her body and mind were not without value to her and yet recognition by the public was only one factor in a complex equation between time and eternity. The reflection of the irony or even vulgarity of much of life was accepted in a mingled humor and patience that was close kin to nobility. Hers was no cloistered virtue; the problems of modern life were close to her eyes and the sadness of humanity wailed in her ears without making a din in her mind. Music resolved the discords, and grass, mountains, and water purified the evil. In it all there is a distinction that carries us back to the Greek of Theocritus and to the lovely figure of Nausicaa, happier than either because she found God her friend and lived her poetry into home and happy human life.

MARY A. JORDAN,

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New Haven, Connecticut.

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Bramble-Fruit

FROM the hillsides of your thought
I have gathered bramble-fruit,
From your upland lakes of thinking
I have taken sweet-flag root.

I have tasted apple-leaves,
I have tasted stalks of fern,
Wintergreen and purple clover,
Plants that tang, or cloy, or burn.

I have eaten black choke-cherries
Till my tongue was thick and numb,
Chewed the bitter leaves of cedar
And the unburned, bad spruce gum.

Not for living, not for food
Are the thoughts you gave to me,
Hardly more than hungry tasting
Where no better food could be.

Yet the tastes that hurt and pucker
Like the leaf that's tart and new
Feed me, feed me with more hunger
For the root and flower of you.

Our Favorite Selves

THERE'S many a you, and many an I;
We're half a hundred different selves,
And some of us are wise and old,
And some of us are singing elves.
Come, be the you you love the most—
Come out and play awhile with me,
I call you with my favorite self,
A self I seldom dare to be.
The winds are singing for our joy
The skies are infinitely wide
And I would dance down their blue roads
And have you dancing at my side.
All things that are belong to me:
I own the sunlight, and cold lakes
White lilies, at their edges are
Thick reeds, and the damp green fern-brakes.
I own long hills to think upon,
And woods where slender shadows sway,
I'm master of their dreams that dance;
I've taught the satyrs what to play.
The world is crimson if I wish,
The world is gold to dress my moods;
Swift, splashing waters clothe my thought;
My dreams are perfumed by dark woods.

Come out and play awhile with me;
Be what you wish, I shall not care
While you are glad—come dance with me
And be yourself: be who you dare.

Fire

BURN bright, burn hot, O high desire
And twist my soul to singing fire;
Rush through my thought like windy flame
Making past wisdom but a name
And all my thought's dry dust and ash
Kindle into a mighty flash
Of fiery faith and perfect sight,
Illumining my self's dense night;
O wild desire that flames and sings
That leaps beyond the ways of wings
Into the highest, holiest skies
Beyond where reason's victory flies,
Turn me to fire, white flower of light
Burn out the shadow of my sight
Burn into me and make me fire
Leaping forever hotter, higher
Above the ways of thought or word,
Beyond where dimmest sounds are heard,
O brave desire, burn your light
To the horizons of our night
Till we who love may wholly be
Lost in your flame's infinity!

Beauty

I HAVE been struck by flying gusts of passion,
Shaken, bent low like wheat fields bowed with rain,
I've leaned with thoughts that were like summer
wind-storms,
Tossed, swayed, turned skyward, yearned upward
again,
Upward and upward pulled by rushing passion,
Though caught in earth I've touched the mighty sky,
Swayed back at last and trembled into quiet
When the great wind that claimed me had gone by.
Beauty has been for me this storm of feeling,
Beauty that thrills me, bows me with desire,
Buffets me, strikes me down like grass that's frail,
Lifts me above my own strength high and higher.
I shall not break before this perfect passion;
I'll bend to rushing thoughts like weakest grass,
Yield to the wind and find in it my glory
With every storm of beauty that shall pass.

Color

CRIMSON I love you—crimson, be my friend!
Paint my dark hours with your flame and shade,
Glow through my thoughts, shine, burn, be light,
Be the rich color by which my moods are made.
Crimson for glory, gleaming for delight,
Shadowed to depths unconquered as dark seas,
Be laughing thunder rolling down my night,
Be song, be soul of lightning, be no breeze
But a great wind far swinging down long skies,
Be all adventure ready to make me wise,
Be like the strength standing in old pine-trees,
Be music clashing, mounting up in spires,
Falling in long great swells, like old desires
Fulfilled and heavy, be music leaping high
To prick new stars up through a brittle sky.
Stay with me, color of glory, mood of fires—
Crimson—I love you, crimson be my friend!

Come Not Near Me, Love

COME not near me, Love,
Let my heart be cold
As the chilly hearts
Of the very old.

Come not near me, Love,
With your lips of fire,
Aching, throbbing, with
Bitter-sweet desire.

Love came toward me once
But I ran away,
For his face was white
And his lips were grey.

Love came near again
But I ran for fright,
Of his pain-flushed face
And his eyes' strange light.

Come not near me, Love,
Leave me lonely, dumb,
For I shall sing myself to death
The next time you come.

Song

I FOUGHT for beauty with a sword of song
A blade of music piercing all of night,
Cutting the darkness clean to airy shreds—
A fringe of shadow blowing in the Light.

I fought for beauty with a sword of song,
I slashed a way for beauty everywhere;
Ecstatic, mad, I cut my heart to shreds
Thinking to make a way for beauty there.

Mummy

O NAME me not for what I seem to be
From these wise thoughts I mouth so prettily:
They are but cover of the self I am,
And for my broken heart, bandage of sham—
A painted bandage like a mummy case,
Mask for my weeping, mask for my soul's face.
For I have bound me in wisdom close and tight;
Hidden I live and secret from all light.
And am I fair,—who knows, or am I wise?
And who shall tear the linen from my eyes
Or strip the mask off winded layer by layer
Until my hidden soul stands proud and bare?
Careful, O words, O long, deceiving sound
That wraps my true thought and my sorrow round,
Hold sure, O painted wisdom, do not slip
Lest trembling knee be seen, or quivering lip!

Mood

SOFTLY the night sings under the still trees;
A friend has sent me words of dust and fire,
Whose road goes into shadow places. These
Few pages patterned with ink are all desire,
All that one wishes, all that no one knows—
Youth puzzled with life, youth crying out, youth dumb.
I read, I hear the sounds where the wind goes,
I think of how like winds moods go and come
And twist our souls to swaying, mad delight,
Or leave them trembling, lonely, heavy with night.

My Books around Me

HERE I am in a lonely, stern delight,
My books around me, Life more real than life,
Sure burning words like flames against the
night,

Against the stillness, man's eternal strife.
The wind makes rhythm on my window-pane,
There is no shape to tree or earth or sky,
From books unbroken passion springs again
And throws beyond the dark a searching cry.
Oh, I am wrapped in silence and in ease—
With hours to think in, many books to read,
The night's long stillness lulling through the trees,
And comradeship in youth's most fiery need.
For I have here men's glorious, daring dreams,
Old courage to cling to, past what merely seems.

It Was Not Love

IT was not love for you that made me turn
My face towards yours at last to take your kiss,
Nor pity, when I saw your passion burn
So close to me and knew this great abyss—
This barrier of silence must break through
Our nearly perfect hour, that today
Would find me smiling, bitter, lost to you,
And you hurt dumb to see the way I play.
I am a woman and there's sin in me:
I kissed you out of curiosity.

To Walter de la Mare

SING, sing at last,
Sing a song of flowers,
Sing a song of midnights
In great stone towers.
Sing, Musician,
We do not know
As you do, the hills
Where sleep-flowers grow.
Sing petal-words,
Sing grass tunes,
Elfin conundrums,
Forest runes.
Sing of the mist
Blown high at night
To the heavy tower
And the one, still light;
Sing of the man
Who seeks rich rest
With his mind's deep life
In his high stone nest.
Sing of the man who believes in flowers
That have hallowed the mists
Around his towers.
Sing, Musician
Till we have heard
Your mimic secret,
Your fairy word.

Sing, Musician
For we must live
By the magic strength
Your song will give.

Sunset

FINGERS of light, caress me, be hands of a lover,
Touch warmly my eyes and my cheeks, my
forehead and hair,
Arms of light, gather me close, close to your kindly
body
Let me believe at last that you love me, believe that
you care.

I crossed the green swamp, I pushed up, grass caught
at my ankles,
I turned the hill under me, trod the hill down for the
sky,
Spurned the earth, pushed down the clods and the
leaves and the thistles
Climbed till it seemed I stood still and the fern clumps
passed by.

I pushed, stretched and leaned upwards, thrust earth
undesired beneath me,
Found the sky, found the arms of the sun at the earth
wave's firm crest;
Halted at last wrapped in sky for an hour on the
summit,
For peace, yes for peace and for passion, for life-giving
rest.

Sun, with your arms of light, be tender, be kind to
caress me,
Draw me close and more close, till I lean to your lips,
O Sun;
Let me have love, and the peace that is greater than
passion,
Let me have love and be proud for an hour till your
setting is done.

The Mystic Drunkard

HALF sick with songs, and drunk with mystic
dreams,
He reels down alleys of a twilit world;
Heavy his feet, and sad and small his heart,
And worn and dim and blinded by grey flames
That burning slowly wear away his thoughts
To threads of ashen frailty, as thin
As bits of cloud caught in the mountain grass.
His weary thoughts are swept by bitter flames
That flutter as if blown by some dim wind
Sprung beyond time or life, out of the dark.
Thus, ever carrying tired moods, he walks
Through a self-darkened world of weariness.
Always in dusk and never knowing light,
He goes with magic mood through misty days.
He goes with bitter darkness in his eyes
Down a dim path that leads to darker ways.

God, quench his thirst with soul relieving light!
Give him Your thoughts to heal his dream-pained sight!
Give him Your light, Your day, Your long wild skies!
That he may walk with surer feet and calmer eyes!

Your 'Cello

B RING out this precious thing of wood and glue
And let a soul that's not of man or tree
Speak through your fingers and the wood to you,
And let it set your bonded thinking free—
Blow without wind and be exalted storm
Burn without flame and be a perfect fire
Shine without sunlight and be gay and warm,
Speak without words and name your whole desire.
Here in the loneliness that no one shares
A something sings to glory your own pain—
A something understands and sweetly dares
Draw out your heart and fling it back again
All radiant with music, till at last
Your thought is song, and loneliness is passed.

'Cello Music

PLAY this upon your 'cello if you will:
Dark music to take the place of my dark mood,
Under-leaf places where the wind lies still,
Hid from the sky; cool branches of a wood.

Take this for music, play it back to me
For I have wanted sound that's rich in shade,
Song like the dark wind that hangs curvingly
From tree to tree where one's mood can be swayed.

In a slow hammock of wind between the trees
And calmed and calmed till thinking falls asleep
All brown and green and grey and cool with ease.
Play this for me with sound that's smooth and deep,

With little curves of windy cadences,
Motion of leaves that touch and pass and touch.
Give me your 'cello sound that surely says
These things: Tall boughs that move but don't move
much

Against tall boughs, and drip of leaves that fall
Not straightly down, to softly hit more leaves
Making crisp, gentle noise; and under all
The thoughtless peace of one who no more grieves

Nor tries to laugh, but watches all alone
The ways of trees and shadows and forest things;
Till trees and shadows and leaves become unknown;
Till only music is known that from them springs.

You Gave Me All Your Music

YOU gave me all your music
And oh, I heard, I heard,
Yet in all you said to me
There was not one word.

You sang to me, you sang to me
With a dark instrument
And oh, I knew I knew
What you and the brown wood meant.

And though you smiled so sadly,
And your hands hoped so much
When you pressed them on the strings
With a woman-loving touch,

I knew that I would listen
To all your tunes could say,
And take them with me
And go away.

Festival

O LYMPIAN ZEUS, god of the storms and skies
Crowned now in ridicule on our great day
With rakish wreath above your cloudy eyes
And scarlet paper neck-scarf for our play!
Forgive this insult to your starry thought
And the stern beauty of your stony face
Insult to wisdom that you might have taught
With your philosophies and thunder-grace
Behind the silence of your marble brow.
O Zeus, this is not Christianity
That dresses you as Christmas jester now
And is familiar with your majesty;
Christ lives in Beauty, as He taught men Truth,
Forgive, that we are blind—it is our youth!

The Lonely Hearth

You do not need me now ; how strange it seems,
For I was once the hearth-fire of your dreams
At which you warmed your heart. I was the
flame

You blew to blossom when you spoke my name.
Now you are gone, either not needing fire
(For May warms all hearts with the spring's desire)
Or you have built another hearth and house,
Another dream roof-tree of better boughs,
Another fire, perhaps more blue, more bright
To burn your heart with a more keen delight.

Life-giving flame, fanned by flame-urging breath
Unbreathed upon by love, falls into ashy death.

Tony Sarg's Marionettes

I HAVE known moments empty of desire
Moments aside from time, fruited, complete—
Rich with the juice of their own honey-fire,
Than all the petalled blooms of hope more sweet.

I have known hours barren of delight
Broken and sick and heavy with my want,
Dark hours when my throat was dumb with fright
Of my own thought so horrible and gaunt.

When the star moments come in my dark sky
Ripened and glowing, I pluck them down in haste.
Sucking the fire, I lay my terror by
And know no more desire while I taste.

And I would live a lifetime, aching, dumb,
If at the end one moment of fire would come.

"Unbreakables"

O H, for an "unbreakable"!
Cassie, Edith, Chick and me.
Other dates are shakable
Never is it so with we!

Laughing fit to bust our guts
Rolling on the floor with glee,
Oh, the happy high-brow muts!
And their subtle jollity!

Shall we swim or shall we walk,
Shall we simply, limply sit?
Shall we eat, or dream and talk?
Or watch Chickie throw a fit?

It is all the same to me
When it is "unbreakable"—
Only say that name to me,
Every choice is takable.

Shall we argue Aristotle
While we don the old annettes?
Shall I quote you modern twaddle
Or Victorian triolets?

Shall we hit the road in earnest
Edith holding up the pace
The expression of a furnace
On her eager, glowing face?

Shall we list while Cassie tells us—

Something magic sure enough:

“One Sunday afternoon me 'n' daboyes we didn't have
nothn t'do”

. . . The incantation spells us

How we love the silly stuff.

Am I dreaming, Edith, dreaming?

Growing sentimental—me?

Down my cheeks the tears are streaming

For I was not there with ye!

Lest Love Become a Task

I'd rather like to have you kiss me once,
And dare to love me just a little while,
And in the darkness take me with your arms
And let me touch your smile.

And you would want my love, I'm pretty sure,
That throbbing moment, if I should lean to you
Some night when we stand on a quiet hill
And you are lonely too.

But I shan't do it, I'll keep the barriers up
With words and distances, lest you might ask
That I should keep on loving you that way,
Lest love become a task.

On Wings of Song

MUSIC to drive us out from what we are:
This we demand, the freedom come of
sound:

Music to make us exiles from ourselves
And beggared souls that sleep upon the ground.
Beggared but freed, made vagabonds by song
To leave the narrow houses of our thought
For the dark river and the willow of dream,
And a sweet hill our thinking never sought;
But now, thrust out of bonds, outside of walls
Free to a world of waters and warm fields
And rising banks that grow to a star-loved cliff
And a swirl of rapids where the moonlight yields
To every whim of the current that holds the song.
We shall be vagabonds and wander, wander
More free than the river, more free than the very moon
We shall walk to the stars by the path of a quiet wind
And shall breathe and move and live in the very tune.
We may fall from the stars in a sleep that is softer than
light
When that light is the light of the moon as it sifts
through a cloud
And when we awake in the grass on a lonely hill
We shall lay our cheeks to the earth and forget to be
proud.
Music must take us out from what we know
And put a song around us like a night
Of singing waters under moon-made shadows
And give us peace, more lovely than delight.

April

APRIL that found us dumb has left us dumb
But different, and we can never be
As once we were. Will summer never come
To ease the spring that's in the heart of me?
Dear brown October; nights of freezing peace,
Sweet, lifeless winter; oh, I long to lie
Like a brown leaf beneath stark, sapless trees
That thrust their wretched branches at the sky.
Spring has betrayed me, stirred my blood too well
With the old fire of earth that all things share
In loveliness too terrible to tell.
There was a power in the very air
And in the trees, when leaves sprang out of wood
And color from darkness, fire in the blue
Tense sky that burned even in us who stood
So close, and made me sway like flame to you.
O April, April must our bodies share
Your fearful fire of life, as earth and air!

To Myself

How shall I sing who have no heart for singing,
How pour soft words out when no words are
here,

Only the dumb, dark hope for finding beauty,
Blindness that does not know when beauty's near.

How shall I give you words of any comfort
When my own thoughts pursue me into pain,
Sing of dark dreams, and make a song of sorrow
Fateful and magic as the April rain.

I shall cry out, and in the very crying
That is desire broken by defeat
There will be peace, the peace of rain and water,
And all the earth of sorrow will grow sweet.

.

A Sow's Ear

CONFRONTED with a sow's ear
I said: What shall I do
To make a silken pocketbook
All dainty, sweet and new.

The sow's ear is my stupid self,
The purse is poetry,
And how I'm going to make it
Is more than I can see.

I thought about my lover
And lots of things he's said,
And all the useful wisdom
He carries in his head.

I mind of how he told me
You've got to own yourself
Or else if you're not careful
You'll be laid upon a shelf.

I mind of how he told me
You've got to hold events
And put a path before you
And not sit on the fence.

I mind of what he told me
About the poor old sow
And that I've got to make a purse,
But I don't see how.

There Is a Silence

THERE is a silence at the heart of life
No blade of song can pierce, no strong desire
Can lick with flame to kindle into flame,
No steel of hope can strike to any fire.
And there a something watches through those walls
Impregnable by wonder or despair,
Laughing at what the self calls happiness,
Heedless of what the cringing self calls care.
Unchanged it waits, and sees through whim and change
The pitiable error of a day,
The joy that flickers down into a dream,
Then is forgotten; sees the pompous sway
Of action, and the pride of being praised
By love's dear ardent object, sees the gift
Of life's own heart-thought that the lover gives
To ease his loneliness and try to lift
The barrier of quiet between souls.
Bound in the silence that no thought can break
Or action touch, deep in the core of life
Something endures; not even for love's sake
Or peace, or wonder, or the things ease asks
Can it be hurt. Unknown, inviolate
It sees and knows the little dream of life:
The little hour of gentleness or hate,
The changing mood, the effort and its end;
It knows that sorrow cannot last for long,
And when the frail heart clutches after peace
It knows that peace will be a vagrant song

Lovely and swift, but passing, passing by,
Leaving an echo of itself, then dumb;
And in the heavy hour it smiles and sees
Where peace went by how some new mood will come.
For though we suffer or are richly gay
Something within us knows: this hour cannot stay.

Fire-Flower

I CAN think mighty music.
I can build it up tower above tower of flame
Where the high wind of melody rushes through
root and spire of flame—

Delirious, wise.

I can think music that is far beyond me.
It surges back and I hear it in my thought
Till it moves me—melts me—lights me to fire.

I can hear it without sound—

I can hear the spirit of mighty music—

I can let it move me—make me fire—

Make me flame—color of flame—shape of flame—heat
of flame.

Till I am a fire-flower of music—

Till I ask for nothing.

Song

I gave you all I had to give,
My very little all;
And still I could not give enough
All, all I gave was small.

I gave you of my thought, my heart,
Myself, my life's care;
I gave you of my daily care
In daily tenderness.

And still I could not give to you
My love as it should be,
Until I made a song for you
That was the whole of me.

And then you tang me with your lips
And held me in your breath
And cast me out against the sky:
The song's end was my death.

Beloved You Can Hurt Me

B ELOVED you can hurt me so—
Let me go—oh, let me go.
Look upon me but be blind,
Loosen from my cared-for mind
The bonds of your intensity.
Draw away your love from me.
Do not hear the things I say,
Oh, be heedless, go away!
Leave me lonely and unseen,
Let me hide myself in green,
Green of grasses, green of trees,
Lonelier than all of these—
Leave me quiet and unsought,
Cageless, netless, wild, uncaught.
Let me lie in cooling grass
While the great cloud-shadows pass;
With my thoughts unwished by you
Let me plunge my mind in blue,
Blue of upward sea of air,
Lost from loving, lost from care.
Let me be alone, alone,
All my heart unsought, unknown,
Break your love walls down from me—
Leave me homeless, leave me free!
Your strong loving hurts me so—
Let me go—let me go!

I Heard the Wind

I HEARD the wind outside my house
And I said to the wind: "Blow in, blow in,
Blow over my face and move my thoughts,
Dusty thoughts that hang on my mind
Like the listless leaves of a poplar tree
That heavily hang and feel no air."
I heard the wind and I said "Blow in"
And the wind blew over the boughs of my mind
And the smooth leaves clattered and made soft noise
When the wind blew in and touched my face;
And all the thoughts on the tree of my mind
Made little song sounds like the other leaves
That were humming outside on the poplar tree.

Sneeze at Dinner

IF you'd a let 'er come
She would a been a whopper.
I'm glad you squoze your napkin up
And used it for a stopper.

Mansfield

I COULD not say your name
Because I loved you so;
I only spoke of "hills"
Hoping my friends would know
All hills are you, to me,
All green shade-gloom—your trees,
All wild, warm, sweet-fern foothills
Sung of by your wild bees.

When I say "mountain-water
Upon green rocks torn white"—
I only mean your brooks
Where I've achieved delight;
I cannot say your name
Because I love you so;
But those who love you too—
Oh, surely they will know!

My Mother

My Mother's cheeks are fat,
My Mother's nose is thin,
Her teeth are made of bone,
But they are filled with tin.

My Mother's nose is blue,
My Mother's eyes are green,
She is my boss and pal,
She is my regent queen.

My Mother's ears are small,
My Mother's face is big,
Her hair is all her own
She never wears a wig.

My Mother likes to eat,
My Mother likes to cook,
She likes to sit up most all night
Reading a naughty book.

My Mother dresses nice,
And she has lots and lots
Of clothes all red and blue
And pink with yellow dots.

My Mother likes to boss,
And tell me what to do,
But sometimes we swap round
And then I run her too.

My Mother cannot sleep
Unless she's full of food,
Candy and soup and beans
And prunes that have been stewed.

My Mother loves me so
She loves each word I write,
And every rhyme I make
Rhymes just for her delight.

Ivy Song

NOT in a mood of sorrow let us plant
Our ivy; let our thoughts be gay and green,
Laughing for all the beauty that must be,
Singing for all the beauty that has been.

Praise now the hours of dreams we've found in books—
Glad soul-adventures in a world of thought,
Praise now the days that were like blazing banners
And all the joy they brought.

Praise now the times that taught us friendliness:
The touch of life, the dream of soul to soul,
The glint of vision and the spark of wonder,
The swift glimpse of the precious flying goal.

Let ivy grow, and let our dream grow too
With urging life, and always with desire
Even in content; oh, let us make a song
Of hope for growing higher!

Scars in Air

THE wind is scarred
By apple-trees on slanted hills
Where dancing branches cut and tore;
And there are wounds of thin birch whips
Slashed sorely in an hour of speed.
Rail fences rip the wind to fringe
And maples tear it into lace
That only long, smooth fields can mend
Or pastures cleared of stumps and briers.
A hill can break or hurt the wind—
Divide or dent it, jag or blunt
Its great cool edge of even air;
A mountain big enough could stop
A little wind and make it die.

I am the wind, and you are a hill
And an old stump fence and a big oak tree;
And I am in tatters from meeting you,
Though you are unchanged from meeting me.
Only myself can heal myself
With time, till my scars like scars in air
Are blended back to the rest of me
And I am whole and blowing free.

Say I Have Been an Island

SAY I was tender, say my love was strong,
That I have saved you going down alone
Into that sea of self where you might drown.
Say I have been an island place for you:
Rocks in the sun, a hill, a grove of trees,
Although a useless place, uncharted, small,
And not your land, or home, or fields of hope.
And if my love made boughs to carry you
To one who is no island, but your home,
Say only this, and I shall always be
Happy, although forgotten in your sea.

Bronze Stars

UNDER bronze stars in an August night
Your hair is soft as the purple wind
That wraps your shoulders regally.
You wear the night like an ancient gown
And the stars were carved to make you fair.
I have seen your drooping, careful hands
Gather the darkness around you close
And fold it up to your hidden throat;
Purple and gold have changed you, dear,
And made you old as the Pleiades.
Your lips stay young, but your thoughts go back
Past languages and centuries
Till I have lost you and you are
Romance for me to seek again—
Deathless as seas that throb and toss
With loss of scattered Argosies;
And I, a Jason, sail dark waves
At the beginning of a quest.

The Cynic

HE was so lonely that the lonely stars
Leaned down from their cold homes to pity
him,

And yet he could not weep: He was too frail
To endure the blessed bitter balm of tears;
And so he turned to laughter, as they laugh
Who are too clever to be wise, too small
To hold the weight of sorrow and be kind.
He laughed so well, he sang so cleverly
No one could guess his heart's sure loneliness.
Even the stars forgot him before long
For they grew drunk with laughing at his song.

Grey Boughs

Now we who loved have put an end to love:
Now the year wanes and yellow fills the
fields;

Now the sun-color warms the chilling earth
And the tree of my heart a crimson fruitage yields.

Gather the fruit and eat, the August sun
Has made it ripe—you knew the tree's first flowers,
Take all my songs; they are the only fruit
Of our spring days and many blossom hours.

Pluck my red songs before the autumn days
Rot the ripe fruit with tardy, lingering heat;
Beloved, I laugh! There's laughter in my songs!
So bright they are! Ah, you must find them sweet!

Now the year wanes and we are through with love,
And grey must follow scarlet, as the year
Changes its season and we change our hearts.
Take all my fruit: leave but grey boughs, my dear!

White Rain

WHAT made them sing so, what made them
sing?
Under the wall I sat, wondering, wondering,

A high voice alone, a low voice after—

And then all together like lake waves' laughter.

I could not see them, they were hid by the wall,

But their tones flew up and over, and I heard them fall

Around me, upon me, through the air, on the ground,

Till I sat below the wall in a rain of sweet sound.

High tossed laughter from folk I couldn't see

Fell through the boughs of a blooming cherry tree

And touched the white flowers so the petals rained too

In a curved white rain where a slow wind blew.

I sat still and listened in the scattered drip of flowers,

I listened to them singing for hours and hours.

Who were those glad people and why did they sing?

And I fell fast asleep, wondering, wondering.

Tanager

DEAR, forget me, since you no longer love me,
But oh, remember things that we have loved:
Wind in the morning over Pelham hills,
Wind in the evening up from Paradise.
When chestnut flowers make a late May Christmas
Under the candle blossoms find my gift;
We have loved beauty, we have tried to be
Lovely ourselves, in word, in flesh, in thought;
We have gone into old philosophy,
Finding in Plato's dream a dream for us.
Under dark leaves where May first casts a shadow
We have sought out a way to make love last
And finding out a beauty immaterial
Beyond May's shadow, know no good is past!
Under white flowers where the leaves are darkest
Remember, dear, beauty must be your love;
When spring lights up the fragile petal-candles
You too must burn, a heart-flame for the Day.

When in white birches the first tanager
Sways and flickers like a tongue of flame
Oh, then know surely (though I am forgotten)
Know that you too must be a bird of flame
Burning the world up with the heat of beauty,
Burning to ashes all that is not life;
Fling yourself further toward the white horizon,
Past the dear river and the long grey hills,
Circle—a red bird though your wings wear mourning—

A feathered flame against the sun-white sky.
Oh, be a red bird when the world's in May!

When petals drip across your book's rich pages
And fall upon your shoulders and your knees,
In the soft rain of withered, scented, broken
Azalea blooms that hint all loves must pass,
Then gather closer the book that holds dear wisdom
Loving the bright words that are always yours.

Oh, there are flowers dripping worn-out petals
In all our days, and there are other flowers
That never break and scatter down the wind-path
But in our thoughts bloom and rebloom and bloom;
And there are chestnut trees with blossoms burning
All the year round, and there are red birds flying
Not in spring only, but all times and hours,
And there is love that does not drip its petals
Like red azaleas drifted in the grass,
And there are fire birds burning in white birches—
Flying across the brown ploughed river land,
Lighting all things with feathered, red-bird fire.

Though the first tanager of our first Maytime
Is long flown off and chestnut flowers blown out,
Though one azalea is long black and trodden,
And though I have gone into darkness too—
Gone out like candles of a far off season—
Dripped from your days like petals from their stalk;

Though you forget me, you will still remember
Things that we loved: sap, leaf, and feathered fire,
And as they pass, you know their beauty lasting
In you, and your desire.

Never a Fox

UNDER white birch trees, maples,
Round by the red osiers,
Under the low willows,
Over the brook,
Through frosted brambles,
I have followed marks in the snow,
I have followed where a fox went,
I have ached to see a fox.
Only patterns of colored twigs,
Mauve, mulberry, red, green,
Only black-flecked birch trunks against the snow,
Half-fallen pine trunks
Criss-cross and slant,
Up and down, triangles of snow,
Meshwork of woodland.
I have followed and followed
And peered through and through,
Squinted into the patterned white,
Looked beyond and beyond.
Never a fox,
Never a strange animal,
Only birds laughing upside down,
Scattering seeds,
Birds with red shoulders and grey feet,
Winter birds come down for a little while
From the far north.

An Unprejudiced Mind

W^HERE have you run with ankles long
unwearied
And knees cooled by the wind? Where
have your heels
Printed the air with dint and streak and dint?
Unstumbling you have run down stony fields
After the skyline, till your very thoughts
Learned how to run: and if your feet are strong
From leaping tip-toe among rooty clods
Your mind is strong too, running in harsh land
Where loose stones bruise and grasses catch and cut.
I think your mind can go barefoot, unhurt
Even where nettles are, can dare to step
Deep among roots and in rough-bladed grass,
And in strange ferns with thorns: oh, you can go
Unstumbling and uncut where wild grapes grow!

The Book

THE flower you picked for me that day
Is lying in the book we read,
Its petals pale and fallen away;
The flower is dead, that day is dead,
And our love too has paled and died,—
And even the memory of it sleeps.
Only the book still keeps
The bloom of life and pride.

Sanctuary

(Mother)

I HAVE walked across your heart, can you forgive?
I have seen the garden where your flower thoughts
live.

Though you took me there yourself,
Did you think I was some elf,
Not all human, half unreal,
Seeing more than I could feel?
When you took me to that close place of your mind,
When you smiled in your heart garden you were kind;
But I should have closed my eyes
To those paths and butterflies,
To those secret flowers fair
That were gladly blooming there,
For I feel that I have seen a sacred place
Which has never known another human face.
May I not be too unworthy to have stepped
In that garden where your flowers of thoughts are kept!

Laughing Moon

THE red moon laughing calls us over the hill,
There are places in the woods one must keep
away from.

I know a pool;

It is there a grey night spirit lives

And the place is horrid;

But the little birch woods around it are sweet;

There is a black being in a dark pool,

There are witch places in the woods one must keep
away from,

When the red moon laughing calls us over the hill.

O Moon, You Are So Beautiful

 MOON you are so beautiful
I need your rounded silverness
To shape my mood to something fair.

For I have loved and ended love.
With well curved light be pattern for
My heavy mood. O lovely Moon
Your silver ice in the pale night,
This windless night of frozen love,
Is peace for me. I gather in
My fragment thoughts of scattered dust
To weld with light another moon
Of my own thinking. After you
I shape my mood, my loveless mood
Frozen and beautiful at last,
New light within my wintry world—
A moon of sorrow and of song.
O singing Moon of perfect white
My own cold moon shall sing at last
To other hills than these you bless,
These snowy hills, these rocky hills
Rounded and lovely in your light;
My own cold moon of silver thought
Shall bless the hills of my desire
Until they glow with frozen fire.
Your shape, your light, your loveliness
Will make the color of my song,
Its new strong shape, its glow of white

To fill with beauty my own night.
My sorrow mood shall be a moon
Turning to silver my dark earth.
You'll curve my pain to one round song
Whose words shall be as light and mist,
Cold, and yet gloriously wise
To fill with rest my empty skies.

Painters

WE must spin pretty colors into form,
And weave from space the striped sunlight
warm,

And make the moving color of a smile
To play its meaning well and pose a while;
One line shall catch much living, many a word,
So you may see what we before have heard.
Some sweeping tintin bravely shall repeat
Our thoughts which will be carefully complete.
Then you will say the picture speaks of things
Of which your heart and the great world-heart sings.

Green Shadows

GIVE me cool words, cool words to ease my
thinking,
Words that make rippling sounds to soothe
my mind!

Tell me of waters soaking through deep mosses,
And let your voice be smooth upon my mind.
Give me in rhythms words of moving branches
That gather sunlight in their outspread hands,
Glad to possess it, just as happy children
Hold in their little palms soft white sands.
Tell me of leaves that hold the silver sunlight
And keep it away from the damp, scented ground;
Tell me of shadows resting on dark water,
And let your words make a quiet sound.
Now I am tired, and I need green branches;
Give me your words that sing as shadows do,
Over cool waters in leaf-hushed places;
Sing to me, beloved, as green shadows do.

The Fishwife

I^N every bone I own I ache,
I ache in every bone I own;
The world is old and I am cold,
My hands are rough, my life is tough,
My heart is sad, my boys are bad,
I eat sea-food in bitter mood;
My life is grey, my man's away.
I ache in every bone I own.

The Smoke People

THE smoke people out of the chimney
Go tumbling into the sky
And turn themselves into nothing

As fast as I wink my eye.

The smoke people out of the chimney

Tread on each other's brown toes;

They don't care, they're in a hurry

To go the way the wind goes.

The smoke people out of the chimney

Ride horses and moose and deer

And they go in a terrible hurry

As though they were chased by a fear.

Perhaps they're glad to get out of the chimney

And lose themselves in the sky;

I've never seen them look around about them

At the trees and roofs they're passing by.

They go running along until they weaken

And turn into nothing but air;

I like to watch their humping, hurrying shoulders,

Their brown and streaming hair.

Dark Wind

RED wind down from the mountain,
White wind over the sea,
Dark wind up from the valley,
What can you bring to me?
One brings the tang of desire,
Another strength for defeat,
But the dark wind up from the valley
Is neither brave nor sweet.
The old wind up from the distance
Has blown long in the shade,
Before there was a mountain,
Before the sea was made,
Through darkness and deeper darkness,
And now through the valley long
Dragging out of the shadow
A weary tuneless song.

From the reaches of the ocean,
From the pathways of the sky,
Winds come with glowing eagerness
But different am I.

In whisper and shadow and whisper
I glide down expanses dim,
Chanting my dusky anthem
Singing my lonely hymn.

Whisper and shadow and whisper
Dark laughter down the hills;

The thing my heart creates
My windy song fulfills.

Where is the thought of the shadow?
Hidden under its heart?
We catch but the shade of a shadow
And of songs the smallest part.

Restless wind from the mountain,
Eager wind from the sea,
Have you no better word to give
Than this dim song to me?
The dark wind up from the valley
Is neither sweet nor strong,
But the dark wind out of the valley
Has lured me with its song.

The Wind at Sunset

LISTEN—down the valley languid
Comes a laughing sunset song,
Spreading all about it music
Where it flies along.

Through the hills of heavy wonder,
Down the valleys of the sky,
I have heard the fairy thunder
Where the frightened fancies fly.

I have seen the honey-flowers
On the hills of dawnless day,
And from scented sunset bowers
I have taken dreams away.

I have tarried in the houses
Of the silver-hearted clouds,
Where the lightning god carouses
And sky spirits flit in clouds.

I have wandered by the mountains,
Out beyond the longest sea,
I have dipped my feet in fountains
Rainbows have made cool for me.

Down white pathways of a far world
I have come a windy way,
Through the gardens of a star world
To your flowery summer day.

Listen—down the valley languid
Comes a laughing sunset song,
Spreading all about it music
Where it flies along.

Babur, Moghul

THE Great Moghuls of Hindustan
Drank wine in Samarkand;
King Babur sang his bragging songs
Drunk with Bokhara wine.
King Babur drank and fed and dreamed
And in his pleasure palaces
Longed for his garden land—his home,
And honey flowers, and melon fruit,
Though he was Moghul Emperor
Of mighty, golden Hind.

King Babur dreamed a little while;
His ancestor King Tamerlane,
His ancestor Great Genghiz Khan,
Never dreamed at all.
They stole, they killed, they bragged, they drank,
They ate, they slept, they killed again.
Their enemies were hacked and hewn,
Their enemies were stuffed with straw
And piled with stones and mixed with mud
As monuments of victory.

King Babur dreamed a little while
In his beloved Samarkand;
He was not as King Tamerlane,
He was not as King Genghiz Khan,
He almost longed for loveliness,
Eating his golden melon fruit,

Drinking dark Bokhara wine,
Sleeping in a honey garden
In the dear city of Samarkand.
He called for music and for songs,
He asked for strange philosophies,
He greeted China's embassies,
Poets and pilgrims from far off.
Moghul Emperor of Hindustan
Lonely for a little while and dreaming,
Drinking, daring, bragging, singing songs—
King Babur dreamed a while and made a song.



Orange Buds

“YOUR room is full of orange buds,
But not because you are a bride:
You broke the flower from the tree,
You snapped the sweet bough of your pride
And filled your heart with the flowers' scent.
We together break twigs and boughs
And a deed together is better than vows,
And you and I by all bent things
Are both of a kind; and you and I
Are bound to each other by break, by cry,
By broken songs, by broken boughs,
By sweetness taken from bridal bloom
Whose sign and welcome fills your room.
By broken branch of orange tree
You are no bride, nor ever shall be.”
This the spring wind says to me.

In the Red Sea

I NEED some singing to, there are no trees:
You must be trees for me, shadows and leaves,
Grass and clean earth and soft moving air;
You must sing things until my heart believes
Green wood around me and grass to my hands
Shadows of wood upon wave-tired eyes;
Make me forget all the sea's silvered heat,
Cover me up from Arabia's skies.
I need some singing to, lest I should lose
All I have loved of the coolest of hills;
Night on the sea here is mirror-bright steel,
I must remember how lake-water spills
Bracken-black, forest-black, wavelet on wave
Under a hill where the trees are more dark . . .
Than swamp pools in April: give me your song:
Sing till my hands feel the touch of scaled bark!

Vermont out of India

ONE day-long day would be enough
If I could spend it in green places,
To put out India from my heart
And scatter staring Hindu faces;
Twelve quiet hours, from night to night,
Tramping down roads whose dust is harmless,
Shaded by willows, edged by grass,
Hilled in by woodlands that are farmless.
If I could fling my body down
In a tree's shade, my face in grasses
And sleep a little summer sleep
Where only bee and wild bird passes,
I would wake up with heart made green
And clean as green leaves on a willow,
I would wake free of India,
And sweet as the ground that was my pillow.

Hong Kong

HONG KONG has hills more beautiful
Than my home hills: Hong Kong is gold
And blue and brown: and very sad—
And dust blows over the green bay
And hazes it: Hong Kong is strong;
And there I touched more loveliness
Than in my dreams I ever guessed
Harbors could give: water of jade,
And in dark shops on squalid streets
Up on the peak-side, jade to buy;
And coolie women wearing jade
On their dark arms and in their ears. . . .

More Lovely than a Mountainside

YOUR shoulders hold more beauty than a hill
Holds when the wind curls over it in summer;
You are more lovely than a mountainside
All overgrown with end-of-August flowers:
Blue gentian, and blue asters, and blue gentian;
Lean softly toward me: you are lovelier
Than a grey pine-tree standing in the sun.
Your hands are kind: touch me and make me know
You are more strong than all the winds that blow.

Cold April

As a grown daughter who has stayed too long
Under her father's roof begins to stale,
And from sweet youth and dear virginity
Grows icily to sterile maidenhood,
So does this spring grow old and flowerless,
Numbed by cold April. No rains favor her,
Clamorous sweet to the trees' very roots,
Sunlight is scarcely kind: In frosted patience
Spring lingers in the loveless house of March
And all unbudded mocks the time of year.

April 25th

I HAVE been brilliantly happy: I have seen
Brown hills turn green,
Soft flowers come of earth,
Hepaticas turn shoulders to the wind,
Grass blades through old dry dung
Point at white clouds.
I have unclothed myself
As naked as an elf,
Stood in the sun on stones
Sunning my wintry bones,
And seen my knees turn pinkly beautiful
In cold brook water; but far more wonderful
Than my smooth body breaking out of winter
Suddenly free and suddenly very strong,
Half not myself, I have seen grey tree boughs
Have little flowers: flowers out of wood,
Choke cherry, and sweet apple, and thorn-apple.
Over and over again dry wood grows green
With rising sap, and blossoms come of it:
This is the best, strangest and loveliest thing
That April shows,
Which my heart never knows
For very sure until I stand again
In a slant breeze to catch the petal-rain.

For the Other Woman

YOU have my lover: love him! cherish him!
Oh, be more kind to him than rain is kind
To frozen fields in the first thaw of spring!
Oh, love him utterly, flesh, deed, and mind!
And guard him from quick, futile, nameless passions;
Be watchful for him, men have so few fears;
And do not make him angry, nor remember
How he has caused you tears!
Guard him the way trees keep the strength of rivers!
Save him from loneliness—from such stark hours
As I have had, whose love is now your lover:
Yield to his moods as April apple-flowers
Yield to the wind their petals and their dust,
For he has need of you more than you know.
Take him—be true—be surer than the dawn—
Be kind! Or else I could not bear to go.

I Would Go among Trees Again

I WOULD go among trees again
And hide from my own self's thought,
I would go back among trees
And run away from pain.

I should hear what the trees say
In shapeless words of wind
With voices that have no life
And lips that have never sinned.

I shall hear what the cold trees say
That live not, yet must speak
In the wild, sure loveliness
That can neither blaspheme nor pray.

Out of my life shall I go
Into strange lonely ease
When I go back to the hills
And hear the words of trees.

Soft, Soft, Soft

SOFT, soft, soft,
Soft shall our singing be,
Only a shape of air
To hold the thought of a tree,
Only a curve of wind
To carry the lisp of a leaf,
The strength that does not end—
The faith beyond belief.
Soft, soft, soft,
Lost to the listening ear;
Only forgetfulness
That cares not if it hear.
Only forgetfulness
May know the sudden word
Only the thoughtless mind
Has ever heard.
Come when the stars are dimming,
Come when the moon falls down
In its misty morning setting;
Leave bed, leave roof, leave town.
The sky will bend and hum,
The hills will lean and sing,
The trees will stretch and speak
A holy thing.
You will forget and know,
You will be sweet and tall
And learn to answer the leaves'
Soft, soft call.

You will kneel on the earth
And you will touch the sky;
The trees' soft words
The wind will carry by.

Burn into Me

BURN into me, gold sun of gold July,
And make me golden as your yellow meadows;
I have been cold, and April-frail with love,
But love has passed as blue hepaticas
Shaken to earth by pelting rainbowed rain.
Oh, make me warm, pierce me with rays of fire.
I am not wholly rid of spring's long chill,
Spring's fear, spring's little life, spring's kind of love.
If I were hot and golden, if I were
Sunned through and through, I could forget that I
Had ever been unhappy or had seen
These fields before they were so gold and green.

These Thistles

I SHALL stand still a little while and know
This hill is true: these lovely weeds are so.
The wind does something to me, and these thistles
That scratch my ankles with such tiny bristles
Do something fine for lasting loveliness.
The mullein matters now: it makes me less
Wise than I was: this hill puts wisdom out
Beyond horizon—with all worn out doubt
And sureness: here these things alone are true—
Stone: earth: weed: sun: warmth: thistle splitting blue
Of flower-fire out of briery green:
Better than all things thought are these things seen.

Prayer

O GOD, if it's for me to be a poet
May I give all my selves to that one self—
When it is better I should be forgetting
I would forget the foolishness I love.
May I do all I do eager for beauty
And know it even in the commonplace;
May I see all I see pursuing ever
The glory that makes one the universe.
When time is mine may I use it for beauty
In learning or in living gorgeously—
Taking from all the world the love it offers
And giving back my passion in a song,
Yet daring to live gayly through lone hours
And find no moments ever of barrenness.
May I have strength to live my days intensely,
To hold the joy that beauty known can give—
Teaching my body to become a poem
Teaching my mind to live in poetry.
You are the Poet, God, You are the Poet,
My aspiration is to grow near You;
May I cast off my selves that cling and hinder;
While seeking poetry may I love You.

Octopi

AND then the yellow, yellow stars reached down
Through the thick night their tentacles of fire
And touched me, stroked me, coiled me in
long flames.

Twisting, they bound me, and with phosphorous light
Licked their slim fingers over my warm face,
Lingered, and clung, and sucked my peace away;
With great whips of cold flame they poisoned me;
They bit and hurt as only stars can hurt:
For stars are devil-fish that swim the sky,
Their long arms dangle down and mingle so
They seem a knotted mesh of loveliness;
Then they unwind and reach and grasp and catch
As they caught me, and bound me with soft flame,
Closer and closer till I might not move;
Soft ropes of flame that ended in strange tongues
Hung from star bodies far up in the air,
And wound, and tied me in their sea-beast grasp
Until I had not even room to cringe.

And so I stood, I do not know how long
Bound, poisoned, sick, high on a starlit hill
And nothing moved, except the slow, slow stars
That seemed to slide down the thick watery sky
Minutely nearer, nearer down the night
Toward their own arms that held and hurt me so.
No least thing moved, not even did the grass,
The sensitive grass that moves so easily

Move on that hill, no sign of motion came;
I should have heard an insect stir the dew
From one bent blade of grass, I should have heard
If one leaf wavered on the furthest tree.
Only the slipping, coiling arms of light
As they crushed closer made a tiny swish
Silken and slippery and fairy faint.
Long, long it lasted, all this torturing
While on my eyes and lips the flame tongues lay
Of the great fish we call the stars.

Then came
An end. They broke, they slid down in the grass,
They melted in the shadow, for a wind
Long from the south, and high as any star
Came fast and broke each poisoned tentacle
And covered the sky and all the stars with clouds
And cut me free, and all the starlight squirmed
Broken and fading down the long hill slope.

If I Could Choose

IF I could choose my lovers
I would take men
Beautiful and quiet
With pocketfuls of gold.

I would have no lover
With eyes like flame
And a voice that fails him
When he speaks my name.

I would have no lover
With hands sweet as stones
In wild brook water
Where a waterfall moans.

I would have no lover
With thoughts of pain,
Melting the earth of me
Like stormy spring rain.

I would choose no lover
Who could not be forgot,
And I still singing
With him or not.

If I could choose my lovers
I would take men
Who would love me and leave me
And do as they're told.

Since the Wind Has Cherished

SINCE the wind has cherished me
I must find an apple-tree,
Climb and hide against grey boughs;
Or in a birch wood I shall lie
Hid by leaves from wind and sky—
Secure as in a plaster house.
Now I need no loving touch.
Wind has cared for me enough;
Wind has cared for me too much,
With too swift, too rude a love
Blown me, urged me, broken me.
Under any kind of tree
I will hide, and happily
Save what peace is left to me.

Helios--Elaine

NAME your son after me.
Call your boy Helios.
I was your best love: Helen;
I was the Light of the Sky you said—
I made the world grow—
I lit the stars.

Name your boy after me,
Name him after your sun-love,
Girl of the sky.
Give him a Greek name
From a people who cared most for beauty.
Name him for me.
You said I was Greek;
Name your son Helios.

Name your daughter after me.
Call your girl Elaine.
Call her sunlight,
Call her dancer-in-the-forest,
Light dancing under green leaves,
Fragile fire.
Name your daughter a name of light,
Name your girl after me,
I was your best love.

Helios! Elaine!
Be what your names tell you to be!
Live under your names,
Take life from your names;
Touch you with my name till you are fire!

In Your City

I WALKED down the block where chance might
show me you:

Then all the peace of you came back again;
And in the city was a smell of mountains,
The sounds of leaves and water, and the feel
Of rooty earth. I almost felt dry brambles
Snatch at my hands, the way your words have done
To hurt me (they made only summer scars).
I passed your house: and bobolinks were singing,
While all your street was one green upland meadow
Shadowed by hills, those hills that we have known.

Easter

BECAUSE the sky is very blue,
Because the hills are kind,
Christ, I would give my love to You,
And the young thoughts in my mind.

Because You dreamed a golden thing,
Lived it and made it real,
I would my lips could learn to sing
The gladness that I feel.

The world is mine, You gave it me;
You gave me a white hope too.
All mine now humbly, happily,
I would give in song to You.

Spring This Year

THERE was a time I did not like the spring:
I was not strong enough to bear my thoughts,
Joy battered at my heart and made me sad,
I could not share the lyric life of things.
Rhythms too mighty swayed my little soul
And bent it to distress when I dared think
On the loud beauty singing through the world.
I could not hold the glory of the year
As it swept towards me like a shoreless sea.

Now I am strong, I can endure the spring
With other brave things growing on the earth.
My heart can hold delight, and while the hills
Grow yellow with new flowers and green with leaves
My heart grows gladder in the hills' own joy.
Within my living, singing self I feel
All of the power that urges the young grass
Skywards a little way in the belief
That the blue windy places are not far
And by the warmth of one more April day
The light-filled top of heaven may be touched.

Oh, I am strong, I can endure the spring,
The pain, the passionate power and the white hope.
All April's fearful beauty I can hold
In my own self and dare to dream of more.

To a Young Girl

Now all the happy spring is in your eyes
That smile like flowers not knowing why they
smile,

And you are gay as the young April skies
That laugh across the landscape mile on mile;
Now you are singing the divine white song
Of youth, that cares not even why it sings
But only knows it must throughout the long
Full hours of flaming beauty give free wings
To lyric thoughts and eager moods that urge
The soul to music in forms light and new.
While in your heart so many beauties surge
I shall not ask the passion of love from you.

I shall not give you love, lest love might bring
Some shadowy dream and you would cease to sing.

Beggar Song

O H, fill the glass with what you have,
The finest drinks are rare,
And let a song run through the heart
Of every beggar here.

Our yesterdays forgotten are,
Tomorrow's far away,
We've found a shelter from the rain,
We live in ease today.

We ask not for your golden coin,
A penny's all we need,
For we are men of poverty,
We are not fools of greed.

Our feet go straggling in the dust,
Our faces know the sky,
The sun and wind have been our friends
And every heart is high.

Come, give a song ye beggarmen,
Forget your tired feet;
Ye who have tramped across the world
Can find this shelter sweet.

Oh, fill the glass with what you have,
The choicer drinks are rare,
And let a song run through the heart
Of every beggar here.

Vegetable Fantasies

 SCAR was a radish
Blond and tall and slim,
All the lady radishes
Flirted with him.

He was so proud
He grew above them all;
But the gardener pulled him
Because he was too tall.

The moral is here:
Don't be too high,
Or you'll get weeded out
Bye and bye.

* * *

Prissie was a turnip,
One of the élite,
Long were her fingers
And slender her feet.

Where now is Prissie,
Say, can you tell?
Boiled in the dinner,
Which tastes very well.

* * *

Hugh was a cabbage
Sturdy and strong,
Who sat in the garden
Singing a song.

He was so noisy
The cook picked him out
From all of his neighbors
To make sauerkraut.

This is the moral
The story would show:
The softer you sing, why
The longer you'll grow.

* * *

Willie was an onion,
In the onion row,
But he was so lazy
He wouldn't grow.

Along came a cut-worm
One dark night;
Willie was so thin
He couldn't fight.

The moral is here:
Grow while you may
To fight the cut-worms
That come your way.

Glad Untruths

I CLIMBED a long hill, inland far,
And I knew that the sea was days away;
Hills and fields about me rolled
Mile upon mile till their green was grey.
But where at last I breathed the sky
A glad untruth was revealed to me:—
The mottled world, spread wide below
And out beyond it the singing sea!
I grew sad for another life,
And a trip to a far-off faery shore;
I longed to go in a fanciful boat
Through seas where mimic tempests roar.
There's an island of stone where giants live
In a city of caves of leaf-green jade—
There's a long, firm beach of silver sand
Where elfin children paddle and wade.
There's a rock that stands against the waves
And ninety cedars rise therefrom;
To its perfect solitude—
The beautiful songs that have perished come.
Sights I longed for were such as these:
And I stood and looked far off until
All the things that I wished to see
I saw from the blue earth's smallest hill.

To Any Friend of Mine

WE have been merry in our little friendship,
Climbed daisied hills and laughed into the
sky,

Talked of far beauty, abstract, useless wisdom,
Compared our fancies, often wondered why
Old days grow lovely—bannered with our dreaming,
Or how it is that things are beautiful;
We have sung ballads of the armored ages
Many an evening while the sky grew cool.
Oh, we have danced and played and dreamed together,
And yet I wonder is this the real you?
I am so lonely under our gay friendship,
Friend of mine, tell me, are you lonely too?

Myself I Was Loving

O H, I have loved you, praised you for your beauty
Given you dreams with which to dress your
soul;

Laughed at your whimsies, wondered at your play-
talk,

Watched my own songs as through your mind they
stole.

Like mountain water I have seen you dancing

But I have found my own reflection there;

You are a gay field wind-blown by my thinking;

You are a place of earth and sunlight where

I have put flowers, my own flowers transplanted,

They have bloomed well in colors of delight:

Now I am weary of our smiling friendship,

You sing too much, your laughter is too bright.

Oh, I was foolish in my wilful pleasure,

I said I loved you, but that is not true.

I did not guess then, myself I was loving,

For I loved but the dreams I gave to you.

Friendly Thoughts

I THINK alone, and I live alone;
But for that I am not sad:
In my lonely dreaming
Laughing shadows make me glad.
Friendly thoughts that are not mine
Come and talk to me;
Whence they come I would not ask,
It is enough to be
Companion to a troop of songs
That love me in their play:
I am always lonely,
But I am always gay.

Yellow

A TAWNY shadow came into my room:
It knew the dust that lies on golden-rod,
Sweet-fern sun-drenched by heavy August
noons,

Pine-needles warm and brown and very old,
That painter's-brush which makes our fields so gay,
Bold tiger-lilies from some grassy ditch,
Cowslips in marshy fields and bumble-bees—
The awkward kind, black winged and very smooth,
Too big for columbine or weak-stemmed flowers.
All yellow things, and gold and brown it knew.
A lazy shadow came into my room
And crawled beneath my old carved table where
It lies in deep dream, but if I am still—
Oh, very still, and half in dream myself—
Sometimes it's roused by a young lyric wind
Come through my window from the out-of-doors,
And then the shadow stirs and sings a song
So reminiscent of a world sun-made,
Dusty, sky-sheltered, rich and wild and free,
That I forget myself and what is here;
I can forget even the ceaseless me.

Borrowed Dreams

WHAT shall we do with dreams we've found
in books?
Put them away, forget them utterly—

As if their glory never had rejoiced us?
Shall we lose beauty? No, that cannot be.
Though we forsake it, beauty will be faithful,
Follow us even down forgetful days,
Give unsought music, fling out blazing banners
And of a sudden lead us down old ways.
Curtains grown dusty will be swayed and parted
And unexpected winds will stir old songs.
Down golden corridors unvisited, forgotten,
Dear dreams will dance again in throngs.
Now we are happy reading from quaint poems,
And in heroic tales we have grown glad.
Shall we forget them—borrowed dreams yet ours?
Can we be losing any love we've had?

My Own Song

THE hill-wind is a white wind,
Cleaner than sea or sky;
Swiftly, softly, eagerly,

The hill-wind dances by;
He sways, he stops, he turns about
And runs straight back to me
And tears away my binding thoughts
Until my soul is free!

In utter gladness shall I dance
With the pale wind hand in hand
Down the valleys, up the hills,
Over the forest land.

The hill-wind is my wind
And we are laughing friends,
Ready to run to the rim of the sky
And the world's blue ends.

The white wind has caught me
Into his swaying arms:
We shall dance across the hills
And woods and fields and farms—
Into the sky behind the hills
Over the furthest sea
We shall go, for we are friends—
The wind loves me.

Kate

KATE was a pretty child
Five years old;
But her hair wouldn't brush
Because it was gold.
Her eyes wouldn't shut
Because they were flowers,
Yet she could weep
Like April showers.
Kate was a nice child
Four feet high;
She could run like the wind
Though not in the sky;
But her throat was of marble
So she couldn't speak;
And some people think
That Kate was a freak.

Benediction

MAY winds sweep down upon you from the
hills;
May fern-sweet waters rush upon your mind;
May forest-hands lay friend-touch on your hands;
May blue of mountain purify your heart.
Summer can soothe all memories into sleep;
Summer will warm you in her dusky arms;
Summer will sing to you of green delight;
Summer will bless you, making you her friend.
Warm stars will sing your fears into rest;
And winds will lull your wisdom into sleep,
Leaving you free to think upon night things
And laugh and love the folly of the sky.

Beneath a Dream

O H, the wind in the trees makes a rollicking
melody
And the rollicking melody pleases me—
For I am asleep underneath a wind-blown tree
And a wind-blown tree is a dream;
And to sleep beneath a dream
Is to live like a moon-beam,
And that is the way with me.

Moon-Nights

MOOON-NIGHTS aren't sleeping nights for me;
There's wind that twitters in the poplar tree;
Watery, light-shot shadows cross the lawn
With wavering motion and are darkly gone
Into wide places. . . .

Oh, I have wondered very, very often
What are you thinking while you talk to me?
Is your mind restless for the sure tomorrow
That leans from the future and calls you eagerly?
Or are you lost in lonely make-believing
Over some futile, gorgeous yesterday?
I feel the shadow of a different thinking,
Some other you in everything you say.
It is so foolish—all our wordy chatter—
The thoughts I gave you are not made for you;
Oh, for a moment when the walls of strangeness
Might be thrown down and ourselves could be true!
I am too restless, and in need of wisdom.
It is enough that we may sometimes call
Friend voice to friend voice for one throbbing moment
Over the firm soul-separating wall.

Oh, I am tired of living
Among wise and ordered things
I want to play barefooted on the sand
Where the moonlight on the palm trees
Makes clustered, slender swords

And we run a futile moon-race hand in hand.
Let us dare to be our true selves,
Crimson-worded, sure of heart,
Let us dare to laugh across the moon-veiled sea,
Let us dare to laugh forever
With a high, forgetful mirth,
Let us dream we are what selves we choose to be.

The Beckoning Voice

BEAUTY is beyond the hills
Calling me; I may not go.
Beauty calls me careless if
I reply or no.
With a graceful carelessness
Winds lay luscious hands on me;
And I hear a friendly word
From every tree.
Do the long hills love me while
All their curves are soothing gold?
Do kind mountains think of me
As they grow old?
Is the earth my precious friend?
Lakes have given me blue caress,
Rippling waters, cool and gracious
Have shown tenderness.
All sounds are like calling-songs
Reaching out to win myself;
But I may not answer them,
I am no elf.
I may not dance across the hills
Forget all thoughts that do not sing;
I do not wear the acorn hat
Or rainbow wing.
Beauty has taught me loneliness
Instead of making me rejoice—
For in all lovely things I hear

The beckoning voice.
Delicate restlessness pursues
My peace wherever beauty is—
I am too human for pure joy,
For exquisite, wide mysteries.

Hammock of Wind

I^N the forest the wind is swaying.
I shall crawl into the wind and be swung between
tall trees;
Wood-smell and needle-smell will caress me;
Spotted sunlight will give ornament.
I shall be very quiet in my hammock of wind.

My Sword of Dreams Is Bright

I SHALL not marry, for I would not trust
Myself to home love, fearing it might rust
The gleaming metal of my swift desire
That cuts dream-barriers; lest the passion-fire
Of too near love should cloud with clinging smut
My blade of conquering moods with which I cut
Meshes of certainty and walls of things
And find the great outside where gracious wings
Carry me outward in delicious flight
Into blue, singing morning, or kind night,
Or dawnless, darkless places where the hours
Are known of but as quickly fading flowers
In fairy tales that a far people wear
A short while bravely for their glorious flare
Of shifting color. Now my blade is smooth
With cutting facts and carving curious truth
With championing me on travels far
To other side the sun, to the blue star
That shines beyond the home-place where I could
Live a slow, happy love-life if I would.
I do not want man-love that keeps one still;
I'll flash my sword of dreams and wander where I will.

October

I SHALL not lose you, hours of passing glory,
Red days upon the hills—and swift delights
That stir my mind to unexpected pleasure,
Sunsets that last long into freezing nights.
I shall not lose you—flaming, ice-white moments,
Tip-toe desire that yearns to every star.
I shall absorb you, keep you in my spirit;
To one who loves, all things eternal are.

Barrier

Now go away, I have no more to give you;
And what have you more you can give to
me?

I've found an end, not of you but our thinking,
No longer do we struggle eagerly
To share our thought, no longer do you give me
Anything of the self that was my friend.
Something is shut. I don't know how to open
Your gateway mood. For me this is an end.

Come!

COME back to me, beloved, for an hour
And let us know again the frail dreams
That are eternal though our love was passing;
Let us crawl back behind this world that seems.
Come here to me, beloved, unremembering
The barrier days that have kept us apart;
And let us make a game to trick our knowing—
Again lean heart to gay, unquestioning heart.
There were rich days once, without fear or wonder,
Fresh certainty brimmed over our thin thought
Before we glimpsed the worlds that lay around us—
This bitterer joy of now unguessed, unsought.
Come back and I'll caress you with my thinking,
Unquestioning give my hands to your dear touch;
And if you ask me for my dreams I'll give them
And say, "Here is my life, it is not much
Compared to what my eager wish would give you:
A hundred hopes, a century of songs—"
Come back, beloved, for a fairy hour,
Let your dream rest with mine where it belongs.

Water-Color Sketch

IT was in the singing season that I saw you last:
You stood upon a long, pale hill against the sky,
The grasses like young swords shone in the sun
And they made a bright fringe for the green earth.
You stood above the world like a new thought at the
end of a dear old dream,
The colorless wind made wild curves and snatched at
your skirts,
But with a slight touch you stroked the wind
Till it was calm, till it swayed fawning at your feet.

Indoor Song

H, make a song for my delight,
And stir my apathy;
Give me cold, stinging words, star-white,
Something to waken me.
Let your words be swift waterfalls
With colored spray,
Dancing down hills whose fragrance calls
Our souls away—
Away to places wonder-cool,
Leaf-loved and still;
Sing water-fall and swirling pool
And quiet hill.
Sing green old rocks, sing swaying trees,
Sing simple, perfect mysteries;
Sing windy sunlight and clean sky,
Sing spray-white clouds blown round and high.
Oh, make a song that's bright and free
To stir the sleeping self in me!

Crimson to Look At

I WANT something crimson to look at,
Satin perhaps,
A dark rose,
Or newly squeezed out paint.
The book on aesthetics talks about empathy:
That's being the thing you look at.
I want the thing I look at to be me.
I am crimson—
As a dream of barbaric yesterdays,
Or everlasting tomorrows
Full of doing,
The kind of tomorrows youth owns.
Crimson forgets grey;
Crimson doesn't know yellow;
And yellow and grey aren't me.
I hate them.
If I had crimson satin
I'd tack it on the wall
Behind my desk.
I'd lean on my elbows and stare into the color;
The shadows would be graceful and proud.
I should see all those shouting thoughts I don't say,
I should see festival of strong living,
I should see dare-to-be-make-believe,
I should see dream unsuppressed,
I should see more
In crimson.

For Patty Brown

THANK you for wearing something red today!
I've wanted red.

There have been so many people around
With rain-clothes, drab-on-purpose things,
With wet thoughts and dull-on-purpose thoughts.
Thank you, thank you, thank you
For wearing that clear red ribbon on your blouse.
It sings,
It is you.

You are a lover of the stars—
I believe you are a friend of Pegasus.
Are his wings gold today
In some other sky?

I believe you have danced on Olympus
And sung with the men who are gods.
I believe in you—

I believe you don't mind all this rain and weather,
I believe you can forget the smell of raincoats.
Lover of crimson,
Hail!

Mignonette in Winter

(For my mother)

So here is mignonette again—
In January—bringing back
July and all the summertime—
One green spray, a fat pyramid
Of pink-brown heads all dusty sweet.
It makes me think of the round bowl
Of rainbow glass I often filled
On summer mornings. Such a task!
To keep the down-stairs with new flowers—
Throw out old mignonette, get fresh,
Cut grass pinks for the dining room—
The long south border's full of them
And always ready to be cut.
And if there's white phlox not too old
(Shake it—the blossoms may not drop)
Take some to put in the front hall
In that big silver thing. And then
There's always roses in the hedge
Down by the driveway. They are called
Rogosa roses. Russian kind.
The stems are thick with frail green thorns.
You need a basket to pick them.
They're red and white—but I like best
The white ones for the living room
Beside the rose lamp in a dish
That's low and broad. Arranging flowers

Seems awfully nice—while winter's here,
Putting them on the table, then
On Mother's desk—and just a few
Late violets on the window-sill
In a thin drinking-glass to show
Their long, smooth, yellow stems. To choose
The vases from their shelf, arrange
The flowers so they won't seem stiff—
And maybe cut the stems off straight—
And brush the fallen petals from
The tables in the living room.
I like to think about my home
And flowers and mahogany
And glass bowls like great soap-bubbles—
Baskets, and rusty garden shears.
And stooping over till my head
Grows funny picking mignonette
And cutting grassy-thick spice pinks
Down in our garden. Though it's now
The time for snow and books, not flowers—
I'm glad I bought myself this spray
Of mignonette, it's so much more
Than just itself—it is an hour
Of summer morning and a cool
Green-blinded house—not just itself
But lots of flowers: baby's breath,
And phlox, and blue delphinium,
Sweet William and white candy-tuft
And the rose hedge and—well—it's home.

Now Will Be Gone

WE shall forget each other some tomorrow:
You will forget me, I shall forget you,
All the swift music of your radiant thinking,
Your eyes that burned unspoken things and true.
I'll not remember ways we played together
Or how you made me happy for awhile,
I shall not even want you to be near me
I shall not need the helping of your smile.
Now will be gone, nor needed in tomorrow—
But there will last, I know for I can see
Down changing thought—there will be left forever
Eternal dreams that you have given to me.

Mountain Morning

I SHALL crawl out of all my thoughts and stand
Against the sky. The world will forget me
And I the world; swift song will catch me up
And sweep me down wind-roads, dustless and cold,
Into wide silence. I'll be another I,
Not I, and yet myself—sublime, elate,
Master of worlds and pale infinities.
I shall shake off my moods as earth does clouds,
To leap into the shining, rain-cleaned sky.
And I shall find contentment for awhile
In a wide ecstasy of silences.
My thoughts will fall below me like grey rain
Spending my cloudy self, till I am sky.
I'll live alone awhile upon some hill
Above the world where every line curves down.
I shall know singing of an elsewhere
And find the holy echo of it here.

More love will come upon me from the sky
And I'll return brimming with song to meet
My old self; I shall spill my song on her
And be again a newer self of old
And yesternew. I'll dare to love the earth—
Earth will love me, and all my feeble thoughts
Will be regenerate with the blue life
I found in far sky-watching.

That time is now—
For thinking my lone hill has put me there
And I can live the bright things that I dream.
The world sways down below me like a tune
Made for my dancing, and all things are mine.
The dim, delicious wind forsakes the trees
To play on me, and life turns loveliness
Without the pain of swift desire, without
The trembling wonder beauty sometimes stirs.
Atop of all my burning moods I stand
Triumphant, glorying in the flames
That are my thinking and express my joy.
All is below me but one mighty thought
That yearns but does not hurt—Infinite love
Molding my thoughts that I may mold my days
To lovely shapes and let my hours dance.
From the green world the wind creeps up to lay
Its dear, cool touch upon me; and I know
That beauty has spread far from Thought to things,
From things back to my thought until I too
Can be glad with the earth and for the earth.

I'm glad my body's not unbeautiful
And I can stand upon a lakeside rock
Wise, unashamed and naked in the sun.
Blue waters have upheld me, made me strong
And taught me to believe in loveliness.
I have felt beauty tingle in my blood
And felt the sunlight give me a new grace.

The wind has laid upon me loving hands
And I've grown beautiful from the wind's touch.
I've lifted up my hands to the soft sky
And felt the blue air ripple down my arms.
I've wound the sky about me like a scarf
And let the wind unwind it curvingly.
Down in cool valleys I have slept on moss
And the dark leaves have made a dance for me,
Sure of their beauty, timid of my joy.
I've done these things wrapped up in a great love,
The same that is the making of all song,
The other side of all things beautiful.
It leaps from the long, slowly curving hills
And in the wind's wide rhythms stirs my soul.

There is a dream which crowds my world with song,
The Love that is Divine, beneath all things,
Sustaining, giving reason to delight,
Delight to reason, ecstasy to life,
Glory to pain and happiness to me.
Love is a passion that can recreate
All things and deeds, passion which glorifies;
Till things once infinite come within grasp,
And even tiniest thoughts filled up with it
Become eternal, and God is a friend.

I Wish I Could Learn

I WISH I could learn some day to forget you;
Though you are gone, you're here, molding my
days.

Then, when you loved me, your moods were my
creations:

I led your thought down my thought's golden ways.

As I now shape my phrases for this singing

So I once shaped your dreaming to a song.

Now you're not here, yet you are strangely nearer;

The you I made has grown too sure, too strong.

You were once mine, now I am yours completely—

I would escape this bitter memory:

I wish I could learn some day to forget you

And be myself, complete and lone and free!

The Dancer Desires

S HADOW of song, come back and fill my being!
Let me turn flame, my flesh become a song!
I would stand high upon the windy hill-tops,
I would be gay and beautiful and strong.
Let my arms hold the sky in a wide curving,
Let the white sunlight spill itself on me,
Let my dance-thought be truer, swifter, wilder,
Till it is strong to set my body free,
Till I can move and show the earth my thinking,
Flatter the sky, praise the young wind until
He'll catch me up in my elatest victory
And dance with me across earth's bluest hill.

The Georgian Anthologies

"O myriad dust of beauty that lies thick under our feet—"

YOU sent me poems for my heavy mood,
Like silver winds upon a dusky world—
Circles of coolness in a tired sky,
Pale, lovely things to spread across my mind
And bring delight where I had had no thought,
Where shapeless shadow like a flowing fog
Had lain upon my spirit damp and dim.
You brought me words that were like long, smooth
winds
To push away the fog and give me light
And loop frail figures out across my sky
And make the dimming ways to gleam again.

So I would thank you for the radiant songs
And pay you for my gladness; but that thanks
Are only symbols for the thing that's felt;
And beauty known an instant is too great
For measuring of debt, and gratitude
Is something more for feeling than for words.
I'll only hope that you can half-way guess
How I am stirred and rested and set free
By this old loveliness they have resung
Who know the little infinite desires
In fragrant thoughts and words that do not die,
How I am glad for earth that's flowered again,
And dust of dreams refired to springing flame.

Decision

I TURNED the light out in my room
And sat and saw the shadows spread.
I tried to put my thoughts in shape
But watched the trees outside instead.
I said "Now what is it you think?"
And, "You must know for one will ask."
I saw the wind flow through the trees
And every thought became a task.
I turned my back to out-of-doors
And said, "Decide, think, you *must* know."
In the shadows on the wall
Tree branches flickered to and fro,
And I was swayed into a dream.
I turned the light on to forget
The magic shadows; but the light
That showed the room brought more dreams yet.
The names of books stood out at me
And song of thoughts I did not want.
Under my desk the shadow was
A place that fairy ghosts must haunt.
I turned my eyes down, and the rug
Became a labyrinth, I walked
In miniature. I shut my eyes
To see no thing. But the clock talked
I looked up to the ceiling then
And tried to find my thoughts alone;
The ceiling seemed a great grey sky

Softer than any I had known.
And I forgot my thinking quite,
In that grey sky's deep delight.
I could not get myself to say
One word of answer for today.
And so uncertainly I come
And for more days I ask you now;
So I may find my thoughts and make
An answer for it all somehow.

Change of Mood

Now I am glad, how shall I use my gladness?
Gladness is power to do and do and do;
All the old things so wearying to me lately
All are now strange and wonderful and new.
My thoughts were heavy, even near despairing,
And nothing mattered very much to me.
I know not why, there was no zest for being;
Now, by a miracle, all the world sings in me.
I could endure now life without a pleasure,
Without success and without praise of love,
For there is God, myself, and air and sunlight,
Nightfall and wind-sounds, and sure stars high above.
There's morning twilight when the day commences,
The sun can rise so many blessed ways
And all are perfect, blue or grey or yellow;
And then there twilights at the end of days
And all the light time. How I love noon's quiet—
Whether it be clean sky or soaking rain
All the earth's being makes me glad to know it
Morning or midnight. I'm alive again,
And binding dulness is but a dark memory.
By some gay power my bonds are cut away
And I am free to praise the windy morning,
To know delight in the old singing way.
Things are so lovely, nothing, nothing matters,
Neither success nor praise, nor love of friends;
How shall I use my gladness that is power?

I must record my joy before it ends!
Oh, I could put me to an ugly labor,
Live through a sorrow and not know its pain,
Embrace monotony that you would pity;
I could do hard things, for I am glad again.

Twilight

Now up the regal mountain
A purple shadow crawls,
And there is changing darkness
In the valley's woodland halls.

I'm left on a lone hill-top
With a remnant of today—
Tonight is all about me—
The earth grows grey.

A wind of elfland whispers
Long words I do not know;
My fields are dim and dangerous,
My woods deceitful grow.

My mountain is a stranger
There's only left to me
One friend-thing I am sure of:
This sun-touched old pine tree.

A Study in Self

A SONG has come upon me from the sky
And stirred me to more being: I am glad.
The bright earth loves me. Now is an old
dream
That long ago I had.

I am my dream, because what thing I wished
By make-believe I've turned into the true.
Be careful, for my make-believes are strong:
I could be you!

Now I am I, the one I wished to be.
I planned me like a game some yesterday;
The sky has helped too giving me a song.
Myself is what I play.

Playboy

CARRY me up the hills
O swift desires!
Burn out my valley-self,
Be freeing fires.
Flame-touched, I would turn flame,
Live rhythm too.
O swift desires that sing,
I would be you.
Carry me up the hills
Till I can be
Something that dares to sing
Exultantly,
Where the sky's flickering blue
Burns the world white
There let my spirit make
Flaming delight.

To Live Out beyond Passion

To live out beyond passion, under life,
In a dim passage hewn beneath the earth,
Is this your hope? Though you deny there's
strife

You flee what you deny, losing the worth
Of all existence brings, except itself
You wait for all that's crying out to you,
Heavens of today. Do you think God an elf,
Some petty magic, frail, and half untrue?
For whom you must play fairy sleeping-games
Till He discovers you, or you find Him
By the black magic of some learned names?
Lost where your lifeless life is grown most dim?

We Talked of High Things

WE talked of high things for a little while,
God and our love, stars and the gorgeous
earth—

Beauty that passes—beauty that must endure—
Dreams dead, forgotten as words of ancient spells—
We talked of happiness—hidden so near—
And of the duty of joy for passing things—
Life and glory of the earth's new green—
Drenched in night's shadow.

My Thoughts Make Sounds

My thoughts make sounds and shapes for me,
Not sounds and shapes of things, but
thoughts—

Slow shapes, and dark sometimes—like hills;

Swift shapes and bright sometimes—like fire.

Today my thoughts were quivering flames

That curtained my small universe,

Brilliantly circling it with light.

Beyond was fire—so much I knew

Nor feared, because it was not fire

Of things but fire of thought that made

The things it burned more beautiful.

I walked the old, plain ways today

But curving light bounded the world

And flickering rhythms followed me.

I was the center in the curve—

Gladder than all glad things I saw.

The world about me was a tune

Made for my dancing; so I danced

Making my dance steps match the world.

My flame-thoughts too swayed time and shone

At the pale edge of things. And you—

Were your thoughts flames, and dancing too?

Love in Things

ASK for no tomorrow; here's today.
I'd do no yearning forward or looking back.
How the dear sky reaches to touch my hands!
A hasty wind rides down the moon's dim track;

It comes to love me. Darkness touches me
Like a warm breast to lean on, covers me
Like a kind lover hiding out the world
With tenderness of arms and mystery

Of blinding thought. And silence is my friend.
I need no more than this: The Love in things,
Leaf-words to keep me quiet company
And friendly water that so softly sings

Fondling me with myriad little hands
And cool caressings; stars to make gold rain
Like praising words, to say perhaps I'm fair
And, knowing me pleased, to say I'm fair again.

Today I have more love than I can know,
And to find more, yet more is my delight;
And sometimes, if I want to, to love back.
But winds and leaves and shadows and starlight

Give without measuring, nor ask return,
Or bindingness of wordy promises.
They let me love now, careless of tomorrow.
The wind forgets the precious words it says;

For all is now, and yesterday's a time
Gone by, undone by coming of today.
Today's so dear I need dream no tomorrow.
I feel the sky caress me, and I sway

Into a fragrant, cool unconsciousness
Of all that is not love, and shadows bend
Restlessly towards me, and I hear white songs,
And all the sky uplifts me, there's no end
To this great moment of my sure delight,
Now is forever, and eternity's tonight.

Song for Rest

CEASE, cease your working, O my troubled self;
Lean skywards with your thoughts, and wait a
space,

Let the wind soothe your too-long housed desires,
Let the wind kiss your face.

Run free of noisy cities and straight walls,
Leap cloudwards into softness and wide ease,
Find where the pathways of the sky spread out;
Try to forget all these

Huddling sounds, and builded, cornered things,
And broken colors that cut into your sight;
Think of smooth miles of graceful emptiness,
Distances of blue light.

When the Fire Burned Low

WHEN the fire burned low,
When the shadows in the house were
forgetting to sing,

Then I spoke to my beloved—

Give me song: what is there else that matters,

For song is fire and darkness,

It is all the windy terror of hope

Held in a spark of white hot peace.

When the fire grew dusky,

When the shadows of my house were no longer
dancing,

I cried out: Oh, come,

With your songs you can make my fire blossom
again,

With your songs you can make the very shadows
sing.

The shadows sway at your coming,

When you move by the door the fire leaps to greet you,

When you rest by the hearth all the darkness of the
house is singing.

The gusty night loiters by the windows to watch you,

The stars do not like to pass by over this house;

Time is trying to stand still.

When you are not speaking all the little house sounds
caress you,

When you do speak all these things take part in the
song of what you say.

In the garden there are flowers and adventure,
The dew has made the shadows cold,
The moon has made the shadows smoothly dark.
But I need not seek my garden,
I can rest better in the darkness of your heart.

Your words are softer than your lips,
Your thoughts caress me more softly than your hands.

We Too Have Loved

WE too have loved, we pitiless, cold women,
And knowing all our own unfaithfulness
Made no sad bond, lest it be sadly broke;
But oh, our minds still keep the men we loved—
We growing old—they boys—still faith and fire—
They golden still as we remember them,
Passionate-sweet, or hoarse with tenderness.

Spinsters

WHAT taught us wisdom when we were so
young?
To see too well without experience

How love goes by as a great autumn rain
And leaves hearts still and broken: we have guessed
Too much, too long ago; now as we wither—
Our bodies shrivel from our minds' rich stalks—
We wish that love had torn us like a wind,
Scattered and broken us, long, long ago.

Sap Rises Now

SAP rises now: buds break and maples redden,
And arm-linked lovers pass my house all day;
All night sweet smells of earth blow in my
window

For there are flowers in the pregnant clay.

O April! you will hurt those strolling lovers
Who do not know their love is but your touch,
So like the sap, so like the melting snow-bank,
The hyla chorus, and they care so much!

Sylvan Garret

I WAS a dancer, ever so long ago,
In a hot attic, to and fro
I would leap, I would sway—
I would toss my arms and play,
I would glide from trunk to trunk,
Fishing tackle, camping junk,
I would stand and thrust my hands
Into the sun rays' slanted bands;
I would loosen my brown hair
And play I was a dryad there
Under the roof's deep tilted eaves,
As if beam gloom were the gloom of leaves,
As if the rafters of our house
Were a mountain-forest's ancient boughs;
As if by climbing the attic stairs
I have found the freedom of all my prayers.

Fling Up the Windows

FLING up the windows, blow the candles out,
And let the darkness come to fill our house;
We've had too much of quiet, let us shout
And bid the wind come join us in carouse.
Revel in shadow, chase from room to room,
And dodge, and laugh, and play with all our might,
Run up the stairs and hide in the soft gloom,
Catch and escape, run down, reach for some light—
Catch and escape, is that the wind or you?
Half of the sky is blown in through the door.
Ha—there I was—and here I am—I knew
You couldn't get me. Shall we play some more?

Put down the windows, draw the shades, and light
The yellow candles; straighten out the room,
And send disorder back into the night,
Let the fire make a tawny, golden gloom;
Let's sit and rest in quiet for awhile,
Here on the floor, before the lazy glow
That finds its flickering answer in your smile.
And talk to me, and tell me all you know,
All you believe, all that your mind holds dear,
And I will listen, dreaming many things,
Rich in content, because you are so near
And there is peace in what the fire sings.

So pass our moods, from darkness into fire,
First some swift game we ask of wind and sky

Blown through our shadowy house, a cold desire
For reveling with shadow, then we cry
Enough, oh, give us quiet and warm rest,
Flame, and the glow of flame, and thoughtful ease.
And surely knowing quietness is best
We leave the wind outside to toss the trees.

And when the fire's burnt out it will be dawn
And no more need of flame, with darkness gone!

Half Naked

HALF naked on a summer day—
I sit at my desk and type away—
Oh, golly, how I'd rather play—
All naked in the summer day—

As I Came up from Paradise

As I came up from Paradise
The other afternoon,
I met a fairy on the road
Singing about the moon.

"What do you know about the moon,"
Said I, "Young fairy-man?"
Sang he, "I know about the moon
All that a fairy can."

Sang he: "I know three morning things
And three times three of night,
Three things of dusk, and one of noon,
And one of dawning light."

"You silly fairy-man," I said,
"You're making fun of me,
You do not tell about the moon
But talk of three times three."

"If I should speak out bold," said he,
" 'Twould hurt you bad, young miss,
Moonlight is but for fairy-men"
And he threw me a finger kiss.

I Am Going To Make a Song

I AM going to make a song for you and me,
Like a web.

The center will be a day with the hills,
A day of laughter on a hill that is home.

I did not need to be alone then:

You were my loneliness, you were listening leaves,
Green woods that mocked.

You teased me with laughter,
Startled me with wisdom.

You have always been laughing woods,
You have been stones to bruise my dancing thoughts,
Singing leaves to mimic in whispers,
Moss when I was tired.

I have bathed in your heart as in cold mountain water,
I have put my hands into rainbows in the water-falls of
your thoughts.

I have climbed high and thought about stars.

The days go round, and a great web grows,
There is no end as the circle spreads,
From the days we have woven in carelessness
From a thread begun on a mountainside.

Were you a satyr, or were you Pan?

I was only a mortal girl

Who could make believe in a childish play
That she was some wood-loved dryad thing.

.

Behind our words,
And the game of our friendship,
Hours when we have shared our moods,
Told our beliefs,
Behind the times when we have read of mischief or
romance,
Vagabondage, philosophy,
Old-world glamor, and fairy-world fantasy,
Behind our sudden words of seriousness,
Our clever quarrels, and the heart-hurts which you did
not guess,
The mild adventuring down country roads,
Through swamps,
Through bramble wastes,
Where the river makes a lyric phrased with willows,
And becomes a passionate song between great cedared
cliffs,
Wherever we have gone,
Even listening to the water-words of the lake,
Resting in the arms of a great bay:
Always there has been another song,
Another shape,
Behind all our thoughts we hear it,
Behind all we see we know it,
It is our mountain of the first day,
It is our mountain of all days.

I Must Feel Sunlight

I MUST feel sunlight warm as silk about me,
Tread through new grass until it stains my toes,
See myself spotted with queer round leaf-shadows,
Look up through leaves and watch where the wind
goes.

I must go back to the green life that claims me,
To the hills' beauty that is sweet and wild,
I must go back up to my own old hill-lands,
Put aside walls, and be a laughing child.

Heavenly Songs

DARLING, you sang me heavenly songs: you said
Loveliness never would be dead;
All shape and color gone, still beauty must
Go on, you said.

O my beloved, what dark winds have blown
And broken even beauty's stone,
Broken the curve and whisked away the dust
I have known.

Darling, I have not anything to say
But this: that beauty does not stay
After the curve is broken and the dust
Scattered away.

If I could pluck the moon up from the sea
And write a song across it with black sea-water,
And tell you why I care for Mexico
And all its blue volcanoes all day long,
And all the black Pacific all night long,
I'd send you it, I'd hurl this year's last moon
At perfect full across the continent,
And it would bounce before you with my song
Written all over it. . . .

Tonight the sea's a swing!
Run under us wind and make us touch the sky;
Push at the sea, wind,
Till it swing me upwards more,

And down, and upwards more,
Be good to us wind,
Let us swing higher;
Shove the sea up,
Give it a run and a push;
Till I dent the moon with my heels,
Till I feel stars touch my face!

Beauty Is Not a Dim Hope

BEAUTY is not a dim hope in the distance,
A mystery, unknowable and far;
Beauty is near, so near the wonder frightens,
As common as the commonest flowers are—
Beauty is here beside me at this moment
In the smooth air that blows across my face,
In the mild earth-smell of the April morning
And in the elm trees showering ruddy lace.
Beauty lies on the hills with a pure radiance,
Sways up in warm mist from the spring's marsh-lands,
And with the hillsides' greening revelations
Lays on my spirit cool and trembling hands.

Beauty would claim me, call me back to laughter,
Free me from houses, put all walls away,
Let me dance naked in the warming sunlight,
Teach me again as a wild child to play.
Beauty calls out in every tiny grass-blade,
I must go back again to my wood-self,
I must go back and hear the talk of water,
I must climb trees and be some strange large elf.
I must throw off the shoes and clothes that hamper,
Let my hair hang down, kneel in moss again,
Yield my young body to blue, flowing water
So cold its glory is almost like pain.

This Is a Song We Could Love

THIS is a song we could love well:

A wisp of tattered loveliness—
Not more near perfect than our little selves
Who thought so high our minds were kissed by stars,
And then forgot our thoughts so easily,

Forgot the precious touch of light
And let our days be tattered things
Unwhole and hopeless of the stars' frail love,
Who broke ourselves against whatever shade
That lay across the light of our desire.

This is the song, the broken song
That tore itself with shadow things
Though a star loved it, as a star loved us.
Listen again and piece the tattered bits
Into a garment of whole loveliness.

Let us be proud and wear this song
As far from perfect as ourselves,
Wounded with shadow, weary for a star.
Let wounds be covered with a cloak of song,
Healed with the touch of music, till desire
Be stronger than all shadow, till that star
Can kiss us without leaning from its sky.

When I Stretch

WHEN I stretch in the morning my body is a
prayer:
I hold my arms out high towards the
mountains.

I kneel in the middle of my bed and laugh.

My body is a young girl's prayer:

Laughing for the blue of morning,

Intimate with loveliness.

The air pours in from out-of-doors.

I sit on my bare heels and open my arms to the
morning,

Breathing blue from the mountains,

Tasting the sky.

Here are beautiful things:

Know them well, O my senses,

Find a way to God.

Spring Came through My Window

SPRING came through my window and leaned
against my knees,
And unmotherly I laughed as I caressed the
breeze—

Then took my smallest baby and sat him in the sun,
Saying, Spring and Baby . . . be friends, have fun!

